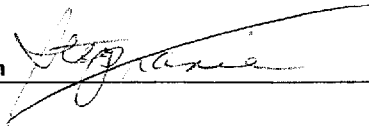


A GUIDE TO CHINESE NAMES AND LANGUAGE



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A GUIDE TO CHINESE NAMES AND LANGUAGE

Introduction

Law enforcement agencies have experienced significant difficulties in accurately identifying people with Chinese names. These difficulties have ostensibly arisen from two causes: a) the unique characteristics of the Chinese naming schemes, and b) the manner in which authorities have in the past recorded Chinese names. The purpose of this paper is to set out certain of the peculiarities of Chinese names and to suggest recording practices that will facilitate more efficient identification.

The major points to be addressed in this paper are as follows:

- The characteristics of the written language;
- The characteristics of the spoken language (i.e., dialects);
- Phonetic characteristics that are particular to the Chinese language (i.e., the tones);
- The manner in which Chinese characters are “phonetically translated” (or transliterated) into English syllables and words (i.e., the romanization systems);
- The fundamental components of the Chinese naming schemes;
- The use of the Standard Telegraphic Code; and
- The manner in which Chinese names should be recorded and reported.

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I. Chinese Characters

Unlike English and other Western languages, Chinese is not built upon an alphabetical system. Rather, the Chinese language is composed of thousands of characters, each of which is represented by only one syllable. Each character (or syllable) is a complete unit in itself, representing a complete idea.

Some Chinese characters are pictographic in nature; that is, they are derived from ancient Chinese symbols that were mere pictures of the concrete objects they were intended to represent. For example, the modern character 日 is derived from the ancient form ☉, which means "sun." Similarly, 月 comes from the ancient form 𠂇, symbolizing the crescent moon. The modern Chinese character for mountains is 山, which in its ancient form was 𡵓.

A number of Chinese characters may appear to be self-explanatory in nature. For example, 一 = "1," 二 = "2," 三 = "3,"
上 = "above," and 下 = "below."

Chinese characters may also be combined in order to create another character and concept. For example, 明, the character meaning "bright," is composed of the grouping of the character for "the sun," 日, beside 月, the character for "the moon"; thus, the combination of the sun and the moon suggests brightness. In everyday, informal use, Chinese individuals will often simplify (or abbreviate) certain of the characters for convenience. For example, the character 蟲, representing the word "insect," may be written informally as 虫.

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II. Chinese Dialects

Written Chinese characters are understood by any Chinese who has learned to read; however, the "spoken Chinese language" varies according to dialects. In other words, although all Chinese peoples *read* the same language, they may not be able to comprehend someone who speaks a different dialect. Therefore, to speak of the "Chinese language" as a single language is an oversimplification. Rather, one should consider the "Chinese language" to be in fact a group of different, yet related, languages.

There are hundreds of dialects or subdialects within the Chinese branch of the Sino-Tibetan family of languages, each of which developed as the Chinese peoples migrated to different geographical regions. Scholars disagree as to the number and classification of Chinese dialects, but for the purpose of this paper it will be postulated that there are seven major dialects. These dialects tend to be based upon geographical foundations.

The most common Chinese dialect is Mandarin, which originated in Northern China and is used by about 70 percent of the Chinese population, primarily in Northern, Eastern, and Southwestern China; it is the "national language" of both the People's Republic of China and of the Republic of China on Taiwan. The Wu dialect, common to the area near Shanghai, is second in prevalence, being spoken by roughly 15 percent of the Chinese people. The Yue dialect, also called Cantonese because it is associated with the area near Canton, is spoken by about ten percent of the population. The remaining major dialects are divided more or less equally among the rest of the population.

Following is a list, compiled from several sources, which depicts the major dialects of Chinese. (It is important to note again that there is disagreement among linguistic scholars as to the classification of certain dialects and subdialects.) Under each listing are some of the smaller dialects or subdialects. Where appropriate, there is also a note citing an important characteristic of the particular dialect.

Major Chinese Dialects

1. **Mandarin:** The most widely used dialect, which is considered to be the “national language” of both the People’s Republic of China and of Taiwan.
2. **Wu:** Common to the areas near Shanghai:
 - a) **Jiangsu** (subdialect),
 - b) **Zhejiang** (subdialect).
3. **Cantonese (or Yue):** Popularly used in Canton and Hong Kong, with subdialects throughout the areas around Guangdong Province:
 - a) **Taishanese** (subdialect): **Taishan** (or **Toyshan**) was once the most important “dialect” in the United States because it was spoken by early immigrants who came to build the transcontinental railroads and became the early settlers of Chinatowns in New York and San Francisco. There are also other related subdialects, such as **Haiping**.
4. **Gan:** Gan and related dialects are common in the east-central sections of China:
 - a) **Jiangxi** (subdialect).
5. **Xiang:** Derived from Hunan Province in central China, it is used in Central and Southwestern China.
6. **Min (or Fukienese):** Derived from Fujian Province in the coastal portion of southeastern China:
 - a) **“Northern Min” (or Northern Fukienese or Fuzhou dialect):** this subdialect is spoken in the northeastern area of Fujian Province, which includes the capital of Fuzhou;
 - b) **“Southern Min” (or Southern Fukienese):** this subdialect is used in the southern part of Fujian Province, certain areas of Guangdong Province, and a large part of Taiwan.

7. **Hakka:** Unlike the other dialects, Hakka is not considered to be a geographically-based dialect. The dialect is common among descendants of refugees who fled from all parts of China during the Ninth Century civil wars.

(**Taiwanese** is not listed as a separate "dialect," inasmuch as the term, when referring to a dialect, more properly refers to various subdialects, such as Southern Min, spoken by some people on Taiwan.)

It must be emphasized that the above dialects are as mutually unintelligible as French would be to Spanish. In other words, a Mandarin speaker would not be able to communicate verbally with a Cantonese speaker, just as a French speaker would not be able to do so with a speaker of Spanish. However, unlike French and Spanish, speakers of differing Chinese dialects would still be able to communicate through the common written form of the language.

Included within most of the dialect classifications are several subdialects. Subdialects are variations of the mother dialect. While the degrees of difference vary within the same classification, it is easier for speakers within that classification to understand one another. For instance, a speaker of the Southern Min subdialect would find it easier to speak with a Northern Min speaker than with a Cantonese speaker.

Language reformers have sought to standardize the spoken form of Chinese and eradicate the difficulties created by the use of so many dialects. From this movement, the Mandarin dialect was chosen as the standard language of the Chinese people. It is the official language (or dialect) of both the People's Republic of China and of Taiwan, and it is uniformly taught throughout the educational systems in both areas.





In summary, it is important to remember that there are many and different dialects that comprise the "spoken Chinese language," but there is only one common written language.

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III. The Tones

As stated above, Chinese is primarily a monosyllabic language, meaning that every Chinese character is represented by only one syllable (i.e., a Chinese name of three syllables will be written as three separate Chinese characters). Also, there are a limited number of "sounds" used to represent the thousands of Chinese characters (or monosyllables). Therefore, there are many characters that "sound" the same. For example, several characters may have the same sound of "ma" but have different meanings. The Chinese language remedies this limitation through the tone system. The variation of tones (or pitch of voice) helps to distinguish one character from another in the same "sound" group. In this respect, "ma" spoken in a certain tone (or voice pitch) has one meaning, but spoken in another tone has another meaning.

All Chinese dialects have tones. Mandarin, for example, has four basic tones. Although best depicted audibly, the following description is intended to explain how each tone is voiced in Mandarin:

	The Four Tones of Mandarin			
	<u>1st</u> level or even	<u>2nd</u> rising	<u>3rd</u> falling and rising, or low	<u>4th</u> falling
				
Chinese Character	媽	麻	馬	罵
Mandarin Romanization	mā	má	mǎ	mà
English Translation	"mother"	"hemp"	"horse"	"scold"

A syllable pronounced in an even tone will be spoken at one constant level or inflection. A rising tone will be spoken in a voice that goes from a low to a high level. The falling-and-rising tone will be pronounced in a voice level that goes from high to low and then back to high. The falling tone is spoken in a voice that goes from high to low. For example, the phonetic combination *ma*, when spoken in an even tone, can represent that character 媽, which means “mother.” The syllable *ma*, when pronounced with a rising tone, can represent the character 麻, which means “hemp.” If *ma* is spoken in a falling-and-rising tone, then it can mean 馬, which is “horse” in English. Finally, *ma*, pronounced in a falling tone, can represent 罵, which is the character meaning “to scold.”

IV. The Romanization Systems

While Western writing is phonetic, Chinese characters are generally ideographic; that is to say, these characters represent an idea, rather than a sound. In this respect, Chinese characters may be compared with Arabic numerals. For example, the numeral "6" represents the same idea to anyone who understands Arabic numerals, regardless of the language he speaks; however, this numeral will not be pronounced with the same sound by persons who speak different languages. In English it is pronounced "six," in German "*sechs*," and in Spanish "*seis*," and so on. Likewise, the character 六, meaning "6," is pronounced "*liu*" in Mandarin and "*luk*" in Cantonese.

The phonetic representation (or transliteration) of a character into a Latin alphabet syllable or word is called romanization. In other words, romanization of a Chinese character into English is accomplished by replicating the pronunciation of the Chinese character using English letters. For example, the *romanization* (or *transliteration*) of 夫 is "*fu*," which replicates its Chinese pronunciation. (This should be differentiated from the *translation* of 夫, which is "man.")

In order to romanize a Chinese character into English, it is important that the English equivalent be pronounced similarly to the "Chinese" pronunciation, i.e., the Mandarin, Cantonese, etc., pronunciation. Referring to our previous example, the character 夫, meaning man or husband, is pronounced as "*fu*" in both Mandarin and Cantonese, and thus it is romanized as "*fu*" in both dialects. In another example, the Chinese character 三, meaning "3," is pronounced differently in Mandarin and Cantonese; as a result, it is romanized "*san*" in Mandarin, while in Cantonese it is romanized "*sam*."

Ideally, the romanization process should be standardized and documented to insure that each and every transliteration is consistent and accurate. Without a standardized system, one transliterator may romanize 夫 as "*fu*" and another may romanize the same character as "*foo*." Both intended their romanized word to represent the character 夫, yet, because each used different rules for "converting" the same sound into English, their romanizations are different. As a result, someone may incorrectly believe that they were referring to two different characters and hence, two different

meanings. Consistent romanization becomes critical when it applies to specific individual names, which will be addressed later in this paper.

Not all dialects have their own *standardized* romanization system. Nevertheless, standardized romanizations exist for most common dialects, such as Cantonese and Taishanese. Each romanization system has a set of rules for the transliteration of characters into English words and/or syllables. For example, the Taishanese system has a set of rules which reflect the variables of the Taishan subdialect, and the Cantonese system has rules that vary somewhat from the other systems in order to take into account the pronunciations for that dialect.

Mandarin has two popular romanization systems, Pinyin and Wade-Giles. Since Mandarin is the most prolific dialect, the use of these two Mandarin romanizations is of significant consequence. Both systems are meant to represent the same Mandarin sounds, but each uses different rules for incorporating those sounds into an English word or syllable. Wade-Giles was developed during the late 1800s and early 1900s by two British diplomats, and it is still used to this day in many parts of the world, including Taiwan. Pinyin was introduced in the mid-1950s by the People's Republic of China, and it was officially adopted by that government in 1978 to be used to write Chinese names in romanized forms in all countries that utilize the roman alphabet.

Since the People's Republic of China adopted the Pinyin system in 1978, many institutions, including the FBI, have likewise adopted the Pinyin system for Mandarin romanization. As a result, in FBI files prior to 1980, Chinese names followed by the notation "(M)" would mean that it was a Mandarin name romanized by the Wade-Giles system, the only romanization system used by the FBI at that time. Since 1980, when the FBI switched to the Pinyin system of Mandarin transliteration, Mandarin names romanized by Pinyin have been designated by the notation "(P)." Therefore, in review, FBI files containing Chinese names could carry a "(P)" to indicate a Mandarin name romanized by the Pinyin system (the standard since 1980), an "(M)" to indicate a Mandarin name romanized by the Wade-Giles system (the standard prior to 1980), or some other letter reflecting another transliteration of the name (such as "(C)" for Cantonese or "(T)" for Taishanese).

To complicate matters further, not all romanization of Chinese names is based on any of these established systems. Often, a Chinese name will be romanized based solely on how it sounds to the English listener. In short, many times there is no exact

or standardized method by which Chinese names are romanized. These situations highlight the need for a standard system to ensure consistency.

The above explanations highlight the fact that although all Chinese characters are "read" the same, most are spoken differently in different dialects, and hence the romanization (which is intended to replicate pronunciation) is different. For example, the name of the famous Chinese General and nationalist politician, CHIANG Kai-shek, consists of the following three Chinese characters, no matter who writes his name in Chinese, but the romanized forms vary according to different dialects and romanization systems.

蔣介石

JIANG Jieshi (Mandarin: Pinyin)

CHIANG Chieh-shih (Mandarin: Wade-Giles)

TSEUNG Kai-shek (Cantonese)

CHIANG Kai-shek (His own romanization: part Wade-Giles Mandarin, and part Cantonese)

Similarly, the name of the founder of the Republic of China, SUN Yat-sen, consists of the following Chinese characters and their various romanized forms:

孫逸仙

SUN Yixian (Mandarin: Pinyin)

SUN I-Hsien (Mandarin: Wade-Giles)

SUN Yat-sin (Cantonese)

SUN Yat-sen (His own romanization)

In the first example, we see that CHIANG Kai-shek used a Cantonese given name and a Mandarin family name (romanized in the Wade-Giles system). In the second example, we see that SUN Yat-sen romanized his given name (or spelled it in the Latin alphabet) his own special way, yet his given name was spelled in the standard transliteration (which happens to be the same in all the dialects shown).

In summary, because the same Chinese characters are spoken differently in different dialects, the English word produced by romanization is also different. On the

other hand, the Chinese character and its meaning remain the same whatever the dialect or its form of romanization.

V. Chinese Names

Chinese names generally consist of three characters. For example:

王 建 國

The first character represents the family name, while the last two characters represent the given name.

Unlike English language names, Chinese names are presented family name first and given name(s) last. For example, take a typical American name such as John Henry Doe, in which the given names are listed first and the family name last. The Chinese equivalent of this name would be Doe John Henry, where the family name is written first and the given names last. The tradition is exemplified in the case of SUN Yat-sen. Even Western publications refer to him as SUN Yat-sen, not Yat-sen Sun.

The tradition of listing family names first is understandably continued when romanizing Chinese names. The Mandarin, Cantonese, and Taishanese romanizations of the above Chinese name would be as follows:

王 建 國

王 建 國

王 建 國

Mandarin:

WANG Jianguo

(Pinyin romanization)

Cantonese:

WONG Kin-kwok

(Cantonese romanization)

Taishan:

WONG Gan-gwok

(Taishan romanization)

OR

WANG Chien-kuo

(Wade-Giles romanization)

It is noted that in the Cantonese romanization and in the Wade-Giles romanization of Mandarin, given names are hyphenated, e.g., WONG Kin-kwok and WANG Chien-kuo, which can provide a clue to a Westerner as to which is the family name. However, because of mistakes and oversights, this should be used only as a lead, and not relied upon entirely.

Every Chinese person has a hereditary family name, and every male and female* child of a Chinese father automatically bears his or her father's name for life. The family name is extremely important in Chinese culture and is a source of great pride. As a result, it is entirely permissible to address a married Chinese woman by either her maiden name, e.g., Miss CHEN, or her married name, e.g., Miss WANG. (*It should be noted that on occasion, a female child in the People's Republic of China may bear her mother's surname.)

A Chinese individual generally will be addressed by his entire name, both family and given names. For example, one would refer to 王 建 國 as WANG Jianguo, rather than Jian, or Jianguo, or Wang. Similarly, a Cantonese speaker from Hong Kong would address this person as WONG Kin-kwok, rather than Kin, or Kin-kwok, or Wong. By the same token, SUN Yat-sen was always referred to by his entire name, and never as Sun or as Yat-sen. Only among relatives and close friends are Chinese addressed solely by their given names.

Cantonese speakers may be addressed by their family name, preceded by the syllable "Ah," an informal term that can be roughly translated as "Dear." Similarly, Mandarin speakers may use the family name preceded by "Lao" (or "Old"), "Xiao" (or "Little"), or "Da" (or "Big"), as in Lao WANG, Xiao WANG, or Da WANG.

Chinese-Americans commonly add a western or "Christian" name as a prefix to their Chinese name. Thus the Cantonese name LEUNG King-hung becomes Peter Kin-hung LEUNG, or simply Peter LEUNG. Often, the adoption of a Christian name is for convenience only, and such an adopted name may not be reflected in official records.

One may also refrain from using his family name in daily situations. In other words, Peter King-hung LEUNG, instead of adopting the name Peter LEUNG, may use the name Peter King or even Peter Hung, avoiding his true identity by deleting his family name. Also, sometimes an individual may adopt a Western given name exclusively for evasive purposes.

Married women retain their full names, adding their husband's name before the others. For example, if a Miss LEUNG Yut-wa marries a Mr. CHAN, she becomes Mrs. CHAN (LEUNG) Yut-wa. Sometimes Chinese-American women will not use their given and maiden names and will keep only their married name. This is particularly true if the woman has an Americanized name; e.g., Mary Yut-wa LEUNG, after

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marrying Mr. CHAN, would become Mrs. Mary Leung CHAN. (In another exception, some married women in the People's Republic of China retain their maiden names altogether, and do not carry the names of their husbands.)

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VI. Standard Telegraphic Code

The Standard Telegraphic Code (STC) is a book which provides numerical equivalents for Chinese characters by assigning a four-digit number to some ten thousand of the most common Chinese characters. The codes have equal application to the Chinese characters used in Japanese and Korean names. When looking up the name CHIANG Kai-shek, we see the following:

the character 蔣 is assigned the number 5592;

the character 介 is assigned the number 0094;

the character 石 is assigned the number 4258.

Knowing the STC will also provide a romanization for each character is some of the common romanization systems, such as Mandarin (Pinyin), Mandarin (Wade-Giles), Cantonese, and sometimes Taishanese. This aspect of the STC can serve as a manual for the transliteration of characters into romanized words for different dialects. For example, when looking up the character 嘉, assigned STC number 0857, it can be determined that this character is romanized in Mandarin as “*jia*” (Pinyin system) or “*chia*” (Wade-Giles system) or in Cantonese as “ka.” Some STC manuals also list the meanings for the characters; for example, the meaning for STC number 0857 is “excellent” or “praise.”

The STC is nearly identical to two other manuals — the Chinese Telegraphic Code (CTC) and the Chinese Commercial Code (CCC). The differences in these works are only in a very few examples of rarely used characters; however, to avoid confusion and insure consistency, it is recommended that the STC be used when at all possible.

An example of three STC entries is provided on the following page:

Character	STC No.	Mandarin Pinyin	Mandarin Wade-Giles	Cantonese	Taishan
王	3769	Wang	Wang	Wong	Wong
建	1696	Jian	Chien	Kin	Gan
國	0948	Guo	Kuo	Kwok	Gwok

Therefore, if a subject prints his name as 王 建 國 , it can be accurately transmitted by teletype (or otherwise) as STC 3769/1696/0948. The receiver of this message would then be able to transpose these numbers accurately back to their corresponding Chinese characters, and also to obtain correct romanization for the name in Mandarin, Cantonese, or another dialect. The STC number should then be included in files and data bases as an alias.

It should be noted that many Asian law enforcement agencies will accept requests for identification checks and fugitive stops only if the providing agency submits the subject's name in either Chinese characters or STC numbers.

How to Determine and Record Chinese Names

The complexity of the Chinese language and naming system demands that great care be taken when recording and reporting Chinese names.

Oftentimes, a subject's name is reported only in its romanized form. Because of the diversity of the Chinese dialects and tones and the multiplicity of meanings for any one phonetic unit, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to correctly identify a name based solely upon its phonetic sound. In other words, if one attempts to identify a Chinese subject by his romanized name alone, great difficulty can be encountered.

For example, if it is known only that the romanization of the subject's name is WANG, that is not enough information to pin down what exact character WANG represents, since the Mandarin sound WANG may be represented by nineteen different characters, two of which, 王 and 汪 , are used as family names. Explained

another way, there are nineteen characters that have the Mandarin pronunciation and romanization of WANG. Also, in Cantonese, WANG could refer to one of five characters, including 弘, 宏, and 橫, none of which are identical to any of the Mandarin WANGs. Therefore, if one tries to identify a subject using only the romanized name of WANG, many errors could result because the particular dialect or romanization system may not be known or because even if the proper system is known, the exact character cannot be determined. This type of confusion approximates trying to look in the telephone book under Gene Smith for an acquaintance who actually spells his name Jean Smythe.

If it is known that a subject's family name is the character 王, then the Mandarin romanization (in both Pinyin and Wade-Giles) would be WANG, and the Cantonese romanization would be WONG. Either way, whether the Mandarin, the Cantonese, or some other transliteration is used, the subject's name still remains 王.

Therefore, recording an individual's name in its original Chinese characters is the most important information that must be acquired when identifying a Chinese individual. The suspect or individual in question must be reminded to *print* the characters, and not to put them in the handwritten, cursive style of writing that many Chinese commonly use. In the printed form, the strokes of each character tend to be more clearly defined, while in cursive style they tend to flow from one to the next without any clean breaks, making it difficult to distinguish some characters from others. Every effort must be made to have the individual in question provide his name in the proper form — printed Chinese characters.

Additionally, because many individuals may habitually use a romanized name for certain American legal situations, it behooves the investigator to require the subject also to print his romanized name, e.g., WONG Kin-kwok or WANG Jianguo. Having the subject also report his romanized name will provide the investigator with the particular romanized version that the subject uses in English situations. This can be especially helpful if the subject has his own unusual romanization for his name.

As alluded to above, the contrast between English and Chinese naming patterns creates confusion concerning family names. It must be remembered that Chinese names are written family name first and that an uninformed American investigator may erroneously think that the family name for WANG Chien-kuo is actually KUO rather than WANG, and would erroneously refer to him as Mr. KUO. This highlights the

necessity of clearly and demonstratively identifying the family name. Therefore, when reporting Chinese names, it is imperative that one clearly identify which is the family name.

In summary, it is vitally important when obtaining an individual's name that he/she print his/her name in its original Chinese characters and print his/her romanized name. The investigator must also insure that the individual's family name is clearly identified. It is also vitally important that the STC numbers for these Chinese characters be determined and reported.

EXAMPLE: Suppose that a Chinese individual is arrested and interrogated. The Agent should immediately have the suspect print his name in Chinese characters and his romanized name, along with any aliases. Suppose the subject complies as follows:

王 建 國

Wang Jianguo.

The Agent should confirm with the subject which character and which romanized name is the subject's family name, and then clearly indicate as such in writing.

Next, the Agent should confirm the STC number for this subject. Unless the Agent possesses some expertise in the Chinese language, this process may require that a Chinese Language Specialist or someone schooled in Chinese transliteration look up the characters in an STC manual. (If such a specialist is not available locally, the Agent should locate one and send him/her a facsimile of the subject's name in Chinese characters.) Reference to the STC manual would reveal that the STC number for the above subject is 3769/1696/0948. The STC manual will also reveal one or more romanizations for the subject's name which may or may not confirm the subject's own romanization. If the subject is from Hong Kong (and is therefore likely to be a Cantonese speaker), it may be determined that his name would be romanized and thus pronounced WONG Kin-kwok. If the subject is a Mandarin speaker, his name would likely be romanized WANG Jianguo (using the Pinyin romanization). In any case, the STC numbers will always be 3769/1696/0948.

How to Report Chinese Names

In order to report a Chinese name accurately, the below-listed steps should be observed in all communications:

1) Clearly identify the family name by one or more of the following:

- a. Place the romanized family name in solid capital letters, e.g., WANG Jianguo or WONG Kin-kwok;
- b. Place a comma after the family name, e.g., Wang, Jianguo or Wong, Kin-kwok;
- c. Place the family name in double parentheses, in order to avoid confusion, e.g., ((WANG)) JIANGUO or ((WONG)) KIN-KWOK

(This procedure is useful for teletypes, which do not use lower case letters);

- d. Underline the family name, e.g., Wang Jianguo or Wong Kin-kwok; and/or
- e. Advise in the administrative section of the communication of the identity of the family name, e.g., "Subject specifically advised that his family name is Wang."

2) Include the STC numbers as an alias, e.g., WANG Jianguo, aka STC 3769/1696/0948.

3) Facsimile the characters in the subject's own printing.

Special Note: Remember that when Chinese characters are used in the names of Japanese or Korean individuals or organizations, those characters also can be recorded with STC numbers. The use of STC numbers allows any name with Chinese characters to be recorded, indexed, and searched just like a Chinese name.